Case 2:18-cv-01747-MSG Document 1 Filed 04/25/18 Page 1 of 15

JS 44 (Rev. 06/17)

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I (-) DI AINTENERO				· ·					
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS				DEFENDANTS	5				
CAITLIN DUBOIS				PEOPLES COMM	IERCE, IN	C. & SHERIDA	AN TOWING,	LLC	
(b) County of Residence of	of First Listed Plaintiff <u>N</u> XCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CA	Montgomery (ISES)		County of Residence NOTE: IN LAND CO THE TRACT	(IN U.S. PI	LAINTIFF CASES O	,		
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Cary L. Flitter, Andrew N 450 N. Narberth Avenue	1. Milz, Jody T. Lopez-	Jacobs, Flitter Milz,	P.C. 2-0782	Attorneys (If Known)					
II. BASIS OF JURISD	ICTION (Place an "X" in C	ne Box Only)	III. CI	TIZENSHIP OF P	RINCIPA	L PARTIES	(Place an "X" in (One Box fo	or Plaintiff
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☐ 290 All Other Real Property	☐ 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment ☐ 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other ☐ 448 Education	☐ 535 Death Penalty Other: ☐ 540 Mandamus & Othe ☐ 550 Civil Rights ☐ 555 Prison Condition ☐ 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement	□ 46 □ 46	IMMIGRATION 2 Naturalization Application 5 Other Immigration Actions			State Stat	utes	
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VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:		IS A CLASS ACTION	Di	EMAND \$		HECK YES only JRY DEMAND:	if demanded in	complain	nt:
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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

Telephone	FAX Number	E-Mail Address		
610-822-0782	610-667-0552	cflitter@consumerslaw.com		
Date	Attorney-at-law	Attorney for Plaintiff		
4/25/18	Can L Fith	CARY L. FLITTER		
(f) Standard Management –	Cases that do not fall in	to any one of the other tracks.	()	
commonly referred to as	complex and that need s	o tracks (a) through (d) that are special or intense management by tailed explanation of special	()	
(d) Asbestos – Cases involvi exposure to asbestos.	ng claims for personal i	njury or property damage from	()	
(c) Arbitration – Cases requi	red to be designated for	arbitration under Local Civil Rule 53.2.	(V)	
(b) Social Security – Cases r and Human Services den	equesting review of a do ying plaintiff Social Sec	ecision of the Secretary of Health curity Benefits.	()	
(a) Habeas Corpus – Cases brought under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 through § 2255.				
SELECT ONE OF THE FO	DLLOWING CASE MA	ANAGEMENT TRACKS:		
In accordance with the Civil plaintiff shall complete a Cas filing the complaint and serve side of this form.) In the edesignation, that defendant si	se Management Track De a copy on all defendant vent that a defendant dhall, with its first appearates, a Case Managemen	Delay Reduction Plan of this court, counseled besignation Form in all civil cases at the times. (See § 1:03 of the plan set forth on the revoes not agree with the plaintiff regarding rance, submit to the clerk of court and servent Track Designation Form specifying the transigned.	erse said	
PEOPLES COMMERCE, INC. & STOWING, LLC		NO.		
V.		CIVIL ACTION		
CAITLIN DUBOIS		CIVII ACTION		

(Civ. 660) 10/02

Case 2:18-cv-01747-MSG Document 1 Filed 04/25/18 Page 3 of 15 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA — DESIGNATION FORM to be used by counsel to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to appropriate calendar.

assignment to appropriate calendar.	
Address of Plaintiff: 256 W. Montgomery Avenue, Apt. 7, Haverford, PA 190	41
Address of Defendant: 1001 Ridge Pike, Conshohocken, PA 19428; 526 Lee Ro	oad, Norwood, PA 19074
Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction: Montgomery County, PA	
(Use Reverse Side For	Additional Space)
Does this civil action involve a nongovernmental corporate party with any parent corporation	and any publicly held corporation owning 10% or more of its stock?
(Attach two copies of the Disclosure Statement Form in accordance with Fed.R.Civ.P. 7.1(a	$Yes \square No \square$
Does this case involve multidistrict litigation possibilities?	Yes□ No□XX
RELATED CASE, IF ANY:	
Case Number:	Date Terminated:
Civil cases are deemed related when yes is answered to any of the following questions:	
1. Is this case related to property included in an earlier numbered suit pending or within one y	year previously terminated action in this court?
	Yes□ No□k
2. Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a prior action in this court?	suit pending or within one year previously terminated
action in this court.	Yes□ No□
3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any earlier	
terminated action in this court?	Yes□ No⊠
4. Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social security appeal, or pro se civil rigit	hts case filed by the same individual?
4. Is this case a second of successive habeas corpus, social security appear, or pro se civil rigi	Yes No No
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CIVIL: (Place ✓ in ONE CATEGORY ONLY)	
A. Federal Question Cases:	B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases:
1. Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other Contracts	1. □ Insurance Contract and Other Contracts
2. □ FELA	2. □ Airplane Personal Injury
3. □ Jones Act-Personal Injury	3. □ Assault, Defamation
4. □ Antitrust	4. □ Marine Personal Injury
5. □ Patent	5. □ Motor Vehicle Personal Injury
6. Labor-Management Relations	6. □ Other Personal Injury (Please specify)
7. □ Civil Rights	7. □ Products Liability
8. □ Habeas Corpus	8. □ Products Liability — Asbestos
9. □ Securities Act(s) Cases	9. □ All other Diversity Cases
10. □ Social Security Review Cases	(Please specify)
11. All other Federal Question Cases (Please specify) Consumer Leasing Act, 15 U.S.C. Sect. 1667	
(
ARBITRATION CERT	
I, , counsel of record do hereby cert	
□ Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 53.2, Section 3(c)(2), that to the best of my knowledge and	
\$150,000.00 exclusive of interest and costs; Relief other than monetary damages is sought.	
DATE:	
Attorney-at-Law	Attorney I.D.#
NOTE: A trial de novo will be a trial by jury only if th	ere has been compliance with F.R.C.P. 38.
I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case is not related to any case now pending or	r within one year previously terminated action in this court
except as noted above.	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
DATE: April 25, 2018 lan L tyll	35047
Attorney at-Law	Attorney I.D.#
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CIV. 609 (5/2012)

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

CAITLIN DUBOIS,

256 W. Montgomery Avenue, Apt. 7 Haverford, PA 19041,

Plaintiff,

CIVIL ACTION

VS.

PEOPLES COMMERCE, INC. 1001 Ridge Pike Conshohocken, PA 19428,

NO.

SHERIDAN TOWING, LLC 526 Lee Road Norwood, PA, 19074-1310,

Defendants.

COMPLAINT

I. <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

- 1. This is a consumer protection case arising out of a lease between Plaintiff Caitlin Dubois and Defendants Peoples Commerce, Inc.
- 2. Defendant Peoples Commerce, Inc. is a "buy here, pay here" car lot that leased a high mileage 2005 Chrysler Sebring ("Chrysler") to Plaintiff for over \$13,000 in payments.
- 3. Defendant Peoples Commerce, Inc.'s lease is defective as it does not provide the disclosures required under the federal Consumer Leasing Act ("CLA"), 15 U.S.C. § 1667 et seq.
- 4. Defendant Peoples Commerce, Inc. unreasonably represented to Plaintiff that the Chrysler was valued at \$8,995, which was almost three times the fair market value of the Chrysler.
- 5. What's more, the Chrysler turned out to be a lemon. Plaintiff has been charged more than \$6,000 for the Chrysler in replacement parts and services, which Peoples Commerce, Inc. has refused to pay for and/or reimburse.

- 6. Although Defendant Peoples Commerce, Inc. warranted the engine for the life of the vehicle, it has refused to honor this warranty when the engine needed to be replaced.
- 7. At the direction of Defendant Peoples Commerce, Inc.'s, Defendant Sheridan Towing, LLC unlawfully repossessed the Chrysler even though Plaintiff was current on payments.
- 8. Defendants' conduct violates the federal Consumer Leasing Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1667 et seq. ("CLA"), the Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Law, 73 P.S. 201-1 et seq. ("UTPCPL"), the Uniform Commercial Code, 13 P.S. § 2A101 et seq., and other state laws.

II. <u>JURISDICTION</u>

- 9. Jurisdiction arises under 28 U.S.C. § 1331 with respect to Plaintiff's claims under the CLA and FDCPA.
- 7. The Court has supplemental jurisdiction over the state law claims arising out of the same nucleus of operative facts which give rise to the federal law claims. 28 U.S.C. § 1367.
- 8. Venue is proper in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, as the operative events took place within this district.

III. PARTIES

- 10. Plaintiff Caitlin DuBois (hereinafter "Plaintiff" or "DuBois") is an adult individual who resides at the address captioned above.
- 11. Defendant Peoples Commerce, Inc. ("PCI") is a Pennsylvania Corporation with a principal place of business located at the address captioned above.
- 12. Defendant Sheridan Towing, LLC ("Sheridan") is a Pennsylvania Limited Liability Company with a principal place of business at the address captioned above.
 - 13. Sheridan is in the business of repossessing vehicles.
 - 14. Sheridan's principle purpose is the enforcement of security interests.

IV. FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

Defendant's defective lease

- 15. In August 2016, Plaintiff signed a Closed End Motor Vehicle Lease ("Lease") for a used 2005 Chrysler Sebring (the "Chrysler"), in which Plaintiff is the "lessee" and PCI is the "lessor." A copy of the Lease is attached as Exhibit "A" hereto.
 - 16. The automobile was leased for personal, family or household purposes.
- 17. The CLA and its implementing regulation, Regulation M, require that certain disclosures in a consumer lease be made in a clear and conspicuous manner. 15 U.S.C. §1667a; 12 C.F.R §1013.4(i).
- 18. Under the CLA and Regulation M, a lease must set forth "A statement of whether or not the lessee has the option to purchase the leased property, and: (1) End of lease term. If at the end of the lease term, the purchase price; and (2) During lease term. If prior to the end of the lease term, the purchase price or the method for determining the price and when the lessee may exercise this option." 12 C.F.R §1013.4(i).
- 19. The purpose of the CLA "is to provide consumers with meaningful information about the component and aggregate costs of consumer leases, so they can make better informed choices between leases, and between leases and credit sales." *Miller v. Nissan Motor Acceptance Corp.*, 362 F.3d 209, 216 (3d Cir. 2004).
 - 20. PCI's form lease provides:

registrate Option at End of Leute Term. If You have an upilon to purchase the Vehicle of the Loans land for \$ 4.799.00 units purchase option fact the purchase option fact the Loans land in the End of the Loans in the End of the Loans land. The purchase option for the Loans land.

21. As such, PCI's Lease does not clearly and conspicuously indicate whether Plaintiff has the option to purchase the Chrysler at the end of the lease. (Ex. A).

22. PCI's Lease fails to conform to the CLA and Regulation M and is defective. 15 U.S.C. §1667a; 12 C.F.R §1013.4(i).

PCI misrepresents the value of the Chrysler

- 23. While Plaintiff deciding on which vehicle to lease at PCI's lot, PCI told Plaintiff that she only had two vehicle options: the Chrysler or a Subaru that had been stolen twice.
- 24. Because of Plaintiff's credit circumstances, Plaintiff was substantially limited in her vehicle/lease choices.
- 25. Plaintiff ultimately leased the Chrysler. While Plaintiff was in the process of leasing the Chrysler, PCI represented to her that the value of the Chrysler was \$8,995.00.
- 26. As it turns out, the Chrysler—which had 127,402 miles on it—was worth substantially less.
- 27. On information and belief, the fair market value of the Chrysler was approximately \$3,000.
- 28. When agreeing to the lease, Plaintiff relied upon PCI's representation as to the value of the Chrysler.
- 29. Plaintiff paid an unreasonable amount for the lease of the Chrysler at this unreasonably inflated value.

The Chrysler exhibits many mechanical problems and facts of its essential purpose

- 30. During the term of the lease, the Chrysler broke down at least seven times and required substantial repairs costing at least \$6,394.00.
- 31. Plaintiff paid for a number of replacement parts, including a new engine, radiator, tire, camshaft seals, thermostat, and fuel pump.

PCI refuses to comply with its express warranty

- 32. At the time of the signing of the Lease, PCI told Plaintiff that the Chrysler's engine was protected by a warranty.
- 33. Under the terms of the warranty, PCI warranted the engine for the entire life of the Chrysler.
- 34. Despite this warranty, PCI refused to pay for the cost of replacing the Chrysler's engine.

Defendants unlawfully repossess Plaintiff's vehicle

- 35. In December 2017, the Chrysler broke down yet again.
- 36. Plaintiff took the Chrysler to Exton Nissan for repairs.
- 37. While the Chrysler was awaiting repairs, and while the Chrysler sat in Exton Nissan's lot without an engine, PCI repossessed and/or ordered Sheridan to repossess the Chrysler.
 - 38. Plaintiff was current on all Lease payments.
 - 39. Plaintiff had not defaulted under the Lease.
- 40. When Plaintiff called PCI to inform them of their illegal repossession, a PCI representative named "Mike" told her that PCI repossessed the vehicle at Exton Nissan's request, but this was false.
 - 41. During the phone call, PCI's representative accused Plaintiff of being a liar.
 - 42. PCI charged Plaintiff for its repossession expenses, despite the repo being unlawful.
- 43. PCI later accused Plaintiff of being late on payment of the wrongfully assessed repossession expenses.
- 44. On the same day PCI repossessed the Chrysler, PCI returned the Chrysler to Exton Nissan.

- 45. PCI returned the Chrysler to the Exton Nissan and/or ordered it to be returned because PCI had no present right to possess the Chrysler under the Lease.
 - 46. Defendants had no right to repossess the Chrysler.

COUNT I FEDERAL CONSUMER LEASING ACT Caitlin DuBois v. Peoples Commerce, Inc.

- 47. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained above as if the same were set forth at length herein.
- 48. Plaintiff is a "person" and "lessee" as defined under the CLA, 15 U.S.C. § 1667(2) and the implementing regulations at 12 C.F.R. §1013.2(g) and (k).
- 49. PCI leases automobiles to consumers throughout Pennsylvania through the use of a "Consumer Lease" as defined under the CLA, 15 U.S.C. § 1667(1) and 12 C.F.R. §1013.2(e).
- 50. PCI is a "lessor" as defined under the CLA, 15 U.S.C. § 1667(3) and 12 C.F.R. §1013.2(h).
- 51. PCI violated the CLA and Regulation M by using a consumer lease in its transaction with Plaintiff which does not conform to the requirements of the Act.
- 52. PCI's Lease does not provide the disclosures in the form and manner required under the CLA and Regulation M, including as to Plaintiff's right to purchase the Chrysler at the end of the lease.
- 53. As a result of said PCI's conduct, Plaintiff has been damaged by not having the benefit of the mandated disclosures.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that this Court enter judgment against the Defendant Peoples Commerce, Inc., for:

(a) Damages, 15 U.S.C. § 1667d, § 1640(a);

- (b) Attorney's fees and costs; and
- (c) Such other further relief as this Court deems just and appropriate.

COUNT II UNIFORM COMMERCIAL CODE (Breach of Express Warranty) Caitlin DuBois v. Peoples Commerce, Inc.

- 54. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained above as if the same were set forth at length herein.
- 55. At the time of leasing, PCI told Plaintiff that the Chrysler's engine for the life of the Chrysler.
- 56. PCI expressly warranted that the Chrysler's engine for the life of the Chrysler. 13 Pa. C.S. § 2A210.
 - 57. PCI refused to honor this express warranty when the engine required replacing.
- 58. As a result of PCI's conduct, Plaintiff has suffered damages. 13 P.S. § 2A508 (d). WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that this Court enter judgment against PCI, for:
 - (a) Actual damages;
 - (b) Attorney's fees and costs; and
 - (c) Such other further relief as this Court deems just and appropriate.

COUNT III UNIFORM COMMERCIAL CODE

(Lease unconscionability)
Caitlin DuBois v. Peoples Commerce, Inc.

- 59. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained above as if the same were set forth at length herein.
- 60. The Uniform Commercial Code prohibits the making of any unconscionable leases or unconscionable lease terms. 13 P.S. § 2A108.

- 61. When Plaintiff was deciding on which vehicle to lease, PCI presented Plaintiff with only two options for vehicles to lease: the Chrysler or a vehicle that had been stolen twice.
- 62. When Plaintiff was deciding whether to lease the Chrysler, PCI represented to Plaintiff that the value of the Chrysler was \$8,995.00.
 - 63. At the time, the Chrysler's market value was approximately \$3,000.
- 64. Plaintiff relied on PCI's representation as to the value of the Chrysler in making her decision to lease the Chrysler.
 - 65. Plaintiff paid an unconscionable amount to lease the Chrysler.
- 66. Plaintiff was not given a fair opportunity to lease a vehicle at or near to a fair market value.
- 67. As a result of PCI's conduct, Plaintiff has suffered damages.

 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that this Court enter judgment against PCI, for:
 - (a) Actual damages;
 - (b) Equitable relief, including but not limited to voiding the lease;
 - (c) Attorney's fees and costs; and
 - (d) Such other further relief as this Court deems just and appropriate.

COUNT IV UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES AND CONSUMER PROTECTION LAW Caitlin DuBois v. Peoples Commerce, Inc.

- 68. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained above as if the same were set forth at length herein.
 - 69. PCI is a person under the UTPCPL. 73 P.S. § 201-2(2).
- 70. The UTPCPL prohibits persons from "[r]epresenting that goods or services have . . . characteristics . . . that they do not have" 73 P.S. $\S 201-2(4)(v)$.

- 71. The UTPCPL also prohibits persons from "[r]epresenting that goods or services are of a particular standard, quality or grade . . . if they are of another" 73 P.S. § 201-2(4)(vii).
- 72. PCI's representations as to the value of the vehicle violates the above provisions of the UTPCPL.
 - 73. Plaintiff purchased the vehicle in reliance upon PCI's representations.
- 74. As a result of PCI's conduct, Plaintiff has suffered ascertainable losses in the form of paying an inflated amount for the vehicle.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that this Court enter judgment against PCI, for:

- (a) Actual damages;
- (b) Statutory damages;
- (b) Attorney's fees and costs; and
- (c) Such other further relief as this Court deems just and appropriate.

CONVERSION/TRESPASS TO CHATTELS Caitlin DuBois v. Peoples Commerce, Inc. & Sheridan Towing, LLC

- 75. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained above as if the same were set forth at length herein.
 - 76. Plaintiff was lawfully in possession of the Chrysler under the terms of the Lease.
- 77. Defendants PCI and Sheridan repossessed Plaintiff's Chrysler and/or ordered it to be repossessed, and deprived Plaintiff of her lawful use of the Chrysler.
 - 78. At the time of repossession, Plaintiff was current on all Lease payments.
 - 79. At the time of repossession, Plaintiff had not breached the Lease.
- 80. Defendants took Plaintiff's Chrysler without her consent, without lawful justification, and without a lawful right to possession.

9

81. As a result of each Defendants intentional, willful and reckless conduct, Plaintiff has been damaged.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff Caitlin DuBois demands judgment against Defendants PCI and Sheridan, jointly and severally, for the following:

- (a) Actual damages;
- (b) Punitive damages; and
- (c) Such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

V. <u>DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL</u>

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury as to all issues so triable.

Respectfully submitted:

Date: Afril 25,20/

CARY L. FLITTER ANDREW M. MILZ

JODY THOMAS LÓPEZ-JACOBS

FLITTER MILZ, P.C.

450 N Narberth Ave, Suite 101

Narberth, PA 19072

(610) 266-7863

Attorneys for Plaintiff

EXHIBIT "A"

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